Kashmir, genocide and the spirit of resistance

Genocide Watch lists Ten Stages of the genocidal process. Now, Kashmir exhibits all those stages, especially when considering India's current horrendous onslaught on Kashmiri civil liberties, writes Farhan Mujahid Chak.

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Farhan Mujahid Chak (/taxonomy/term/67235) | 20 August, 2019

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NGO Genocide Watch has issued a genocide alert on Kashmir [Getty]

What is so revolting about tyranny that it stirs the human spirit in such a way, compelling us to resist? Instinctively, the thought of oppression pierces at the very essence of our human condition.

Film, music, art and literature all celebrate those who, with an unconquerable will, struggle against all odds and defy persecution.

Yet, victory is no easy feat.

Throughout history one will find countless substantiations that victory comes from the *esprit de résistance*. And, prominent English author George Orwell's evocative short story *Animal Farm* applauds just that, while reprimanding despotism.

"Is it not crystal clear, then, comrades, that all the evils of this life of ours spring from the tyranny of human beings? Only get rid of Man, and the produce of our labour would be our own... What then must we do? Why, work night and day, body and soul, for the overthrow of the human race! That is my message to you, comrades: Rebellion!"

For Orwell, subjugation must be resisted, since acquiescence only prolongs suffering; there can be no two-minds about it.

With that thought, consider India's settler-colonial project (https://theglobepost.com/2019/08/16/kashmir-culmination-plan/?fbclid=IwAR2P-MaYuQwgSKk9oxrJdz5Q7SyzXWvEX6-nxjX-4apEYuJPoCLYPN4zg-I) and unilateral, illegal and undemocratic revocation of Kashmir's autonomy by abrogating article 370 (https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/aug/05/india-cancellation-of-kashmir-special-status-will-have-consequences).

(https://www.newarab.com/english/indepth/2019/8/12/indias-assault-on-kashmir-follows-decades-of-failed-promises)

Read also: After decades of failed promises, India's assault on Kashmir's autonomy invites a bleaker future (https://www.newarab.com/english/indepth/2019/8/12/indias-assault-on-kashmir-follows-decades-of-failed-promises)

Condemned worldwide, reputable NGO's such as Amnesty International (https://www.amnesty.org.uk/press-releases/india-prime-minister-modi-must-end-lockdown-jammu-and-kashmir) and Human Rights Watch (https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/08/12/india-needs-step-back-kashmir) have all strongly chastised India.

Recently, the United Nations convened an emergency Security Council meeting (https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/08/190816174341755.html), the first in over 50 years, on the deteriorating situation in Kashmir calling for respect of relevant UN resolutions.

More specifically, United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres (https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/08/1043961) expressed concern at the ongoing human rights situation and David Haye, the UN's special rapporteur on freedom of expression described the situation in Kashmir as 'draconian' (https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/aug/08/kashmir-communications-blackout-is-draconian-says-un-envoy).

Yet, most terrifyingly, the renowned NGO Genocide Watch (http://www.genocidewatch.com/single-post/2019/08/08/Call-the-crime-in-Kashmir-by-its-name-Ongoing-genocide) has issued a genocide alert on Kashmir (http://www.genocidewatch.com/countries-at-risk) – the first ever. This, in the backdrop of Modi, and other BJP leaders, monstrously using the grotesque term 'Final Solution' (https://www.moneycontrol.com/news/politics/article-370-kashmir-final-solution-how-right-wing-is-unknowingly-comparing-pm-modi-with-hitler-4295321.html) for Kashmir

Strictly, Genocide Watch (http://www.genocidewatch.com/single-post/2019/08/08/Call-the-crime-in-Kashmir-by-its-name-Ongoing-genocide) lists Ten Stages of the genocidal process. Now, Kashmir exhibits all those stages, especially when considering India's current horrendous onslaught on Kashmiri civil liberties, terrorising the entire population, cutting off all of their communication, flouting international law and norms, and conducting a litany of human rights abuses (https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2019/08/05/indias-settler-colonial-project-kashmir-takes-disturbing-turn/).

First, an unforgiving binary of 'us' versus 'them,' labelled 'classification,' is disseminated.

In Kashmir, the Indian state translates "us" into supporters of their army/occupation forces, and 'them' to Kashmiri Muslims. Of course, preventative measures would include fostering universalistic institutions that transcend ethnic/racial divisions and actively promoting inclusion.

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Yet, this is precisely what the fascist Bhartiya Janata Party (https://www.dw.com/en/arundhati-roy-were-up-against-a-fascist-regime-in-india/a-45332070-0) does not want. They need to spread the false threat of terror to rationalise their persecution.

Second, 'symbolisation' is the process when, combined with visceral hate, symbols are forced upon unwilling members of the purported pariah group: such as the blue scarf for people from the Eastern Zone in Khmer Rouge or Kashmiri Muslims with their distinctive language and apparel being issued ID cards designating them as Muslims.

Third, the genocidal project moves forward by clear 'discrimination' in which the dominant group uses law, custom, and political power to deny Kashmiri Muslims basic rights.

It is driven by an exclusionary ideology and legitimises the victimisation of Kashmiri Muslims (https://www.newyorker.com/news/on-religion/the-violent-toll-of-hindu-nationalism-in-india) by labels of such as 'separatist' 'fanatic' and 'terrorist.'

Fourth, heightened levels of bias, prejudice and disempowerment lead to the 'dehumanisation' stage, which incapacitates the normal human revulsion against murder.

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At this stage, hate propaganda in print, on hate radios, and in social media is used to vilify the victim group – Kashmiri Muslims (https://irdproject.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Islamophobia-in-India-Web-Spread.pdf). It is even incorporated into Hindutva school textbooks (https://www.nybooks.com/articles/2018/12/06/indias-dangerous-new-curriculum/), preparing the way for incitement.

Fifth, the grotesque phenomenon of genocide is always well-planned and requires 'organisation.' This is done by the Indian state, that uses Hindutva militias to provide deniability of state responsibility – such as Hindu mobs led by local RSS militants, who may be disguised as the additional 38,000 India soldiers (https://www.indiatoday.in/news-analysis/story/-if-situation-has-improved-then-why-send-38-000-troops-to-j-k-1576436-2019-08-02) being sent to Kashmir.

Recall, that there are already nearly 700,000 heavily armed Indian Army troops and police that dominate Kashmir. Why send more?

Sixth, extremists need to enhance 'polarisation' – in order to drive the groups apart. Hate groups broadcast polarising propaganda. Laws may forbid intermarriage or social interaction (https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/a-muslim-and-a-hindu-thought-they-could-be-a-couple-then-came-the-love-jihad-hit-list/2018/04/26/257010be-2d1b-11e8-8dc9-3b51e028b845_story.html).

(https://www.newarab.com/english/comment/2019/8/18/kashmir-under-india-looks-like-palestine-under-israel)

Read also: What's happening in Kashmir looks a lot like Israel's rule over Palestine (https://www.newarab.com/english/comment/2019/8/18/kashmir-under-india-looks-like-palestine-under-israel)

Hindutva extremists target moderates – from all religions/backgrounds, intimidating and silencing the centre. Moderates from the perpetrators' own group are most able to stop genocide. For this reason, all those who had previously been dealing (https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/aug/05/kashmir-leaders-placed-under-arrest-amid-security-crackdown) with the Indian state are now under arrest, including Farooq Abdullah, Omar Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti (https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/08/kashmir-key-political-leaders-arrested-india-august-5-190817155454403.html).

Seventh, at this 'preparation' stage, BJP leaders have, chillingly, spoken (https://www.moneycontrol.com/news/politics/article-370-kashmir-final-solution-how-right-wing-is-unknowingly-comparing-pm-modi-with-hitler-4295321.html) about the "Final Solution" which they use as euphemisms to cloak their intentions of genocide and ethnic cleansing.

Eighth, as the stages of genocide advance, 'persecution' is heightened. The victim group's most basic human rights are systematically violated through extrajudicial killings, rape torture and forced displacement.

Death lists are drawn up and property is expropriated. Currently, Kashmiri Muslims are locked down, (https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-49294301) subject to arbitrary arrest, torture, rape, and murder.

“The victim group's most basic human rights are systematically violated through extrajudicial killings, rape torture and forced displacement”

Ninth, 'extermination' begins, and quickly becomes the mass killing legally called "genocide." At this terrifying moment, the armed forces often work with RSS militias to do the killing.

Tenth, the final stage 'denial' lasts throughout the entire genocidal process. It is among the surest indicators of the likelihood of genocidal massacres.

The perpetrators of genocide dig up the mass graves (https://www.trtworld.com/magazine/will-india-identify-bodies-in-kashmir-s-mass-graves-like-it-did-in-iraq--17044), burn the bodies, try to cover up the evidence and intimidate the witnesses. All the while they claim all is normal (http://www.unewstv.com/156163/india-media-is-reporting-all-is-well-in-kashmir-i-say-all-is-hell-in-kashmir-kavita-karishnan-indian-activist-reveals) in Kashmir. In Kashmir, the denial has gone to such laughable levels that Modi and the BJP say their goals are to "bring prosperity and development" (https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-08-15/modi-defends-controversial-kashmir-move-in-address-to-nation) and to "end terrorism." (https://www.newarab.com/sites/default/files/styles/medium_16_9/public/media/images/73D81FED-A6B8-4AB6-8094-A34CA1F8BB22.jpg?h=d1cb525d&itok=tBNIANw_)

Most worrisome, India is declaring to the world that they have begun to gradually ease the communications blockade. That is false.

This cowardly rhetoric of disingenuous 'easing' of the lockdown is used to deflect international attention. A total internet, land-line and communication 'blackout' is ongoing (https://www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/were-back-to-the-stone-age-kashmiris/1557916). And, ominously, foreshadows something more sinister forthcoming. That is, the real possibility of genocide in Kashmir (http://www.genocidewatch.com/countries-at-risk).

Yet, amid these awful scenes of death, desolation and despair, Kashmiris have only become emboldened with the spirit of 'rebellion'.

There is no other choice. Faced with an unruly, unforgiving adversary, all must unite.

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